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EIGHTH PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of Security Council resolution 950 (1994) of 21 October 1994, in which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 13 January 1995. It provides an update on events in Liberia since my last report, of 14 October 1994 (S/1994/1167), including information on the consultations which took place between the Liberian parties under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and on the recommendations of the high-level mission which I recently dispatched to the ECOWAS region.

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

A. High-level mission to ECOWAS member States

2. In its resolution 950 (1994), the Security Council welcomed my proposal to send a high-level mission to discuss with States members of ECOWAS the recent deterioration of the situation in Liberia. The mission was to consult with those Governments on how best to revive the peace process and achieve reconciliation among Liberians. The mission was also to explore means of implementing the arms embargo imposed by Security Council resolution 788 (1992) of 19 November 1992, assess the future role of the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia and examine ways in which the United Nations and the international community could be of assistance in providing financial and technical resources for ECOMOG to carry out its mandate in that country.

3. The mission, which was led by Mr. Lansana Kouyaté, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, visited Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Consultations were held with the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Rawlings of Ghana, with President Lansana Conté of Guinea, with Chairman Valentine Strasser of Sierra Leone, with President Konan Bédié of Côte d'Ivoire, with Chairman David Kpormakpor of Liberia and with the foreign ministers of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine. (This Committee coordinates ECOWAS activities on Liberia and is composed of the foreign ministers of Burkina Faso,

Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.) Discussions were also held with Liberia's Council of State, diplomatic missions, United Nations organizations and the non-governmental organizations community.

4. Mr. Kouyaté held discussions in Accra with the Liberian faction leaders, who were meeting there at the invitation of President Rawlings. He also had an opportunity to address the ECOWAS ministerial meeting, which was considering a Ghanaian initiative aimed at clarifying the Akosombo Agreement (S/1994/1174, annex). In both cases, he stressed that a sustainable process of reconciliation among Liberians was vital to the success of my efforts to generate support for Liberia. He urged all concerned to help bring about the success of the Ghanaian initiative, as that was a necessary condition for continuation of the international community's support for Liberia. He also pointed out, particularly at the ministerial meeting, that the continuing provision of arms and ammunition to the factions in Liberia was in direct contravention of Security Council resolution 788 (1992) and, indeed, of the resolutions of ECOWAS itself.

5. In all its consultations with States members of ECOWAS, the mission emphasized that an enduring political accommodation among the factions in Liberia would be possible only if it was underpinned by a common policy on the part of the six African countries directly involved with Liberia, namely, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

6. The mission concluded that, notwithstanding the tireless efforts of the Chairman of ECOWAS, the Liberian political and factional leaders were not yet committed to a sustainable peace in their country. Accordingly, the mission submitted the following recommendations for ending the conflict in Liberia:

(a) The Liberian political and factions leaders must be brought to understand that, in the absence of political accommodation and reconciliation, continued support from the international community would not be forthcoming;

(b) ECOWAS member States, particularly the six directly involved with Liberia, should urgently organize an extraordinary meeting of Heads of State to resolve their differences and harmonize their policies on Liberia;

(c) If the above could be accomplished, ECOWAS should be encouraged to consider strengthening ECOMOG and restructuring it in order to achieve a better balance of troops, including contributions from other African countries;

(d) International support, including financial support, logistics and equipment, should be sought to enable ECOMOG to carry out its mandate, particularly with respect to deployment, encampment and disarmament. A planning and logistics team from the Department of Peace-keeping Operations could visit Liberia to offer ECOMOG technical assistance in preparing the necessary proposals;

(e) The future of UNOMIL should depend on the successful implementation of the above steps. Meanwhile, UNOMIL's mandate should be extended for a limited period of three months from 13 January 1995.

B. Consultations between the Liberian parties

7. In my last report (S/1994/1167), I informed the Security Council that the Akosombo Agreement had been a source of significant controversy among those Liberian parties and interest groups which had not taken part in the negotiations. It will be recalled that the Agreement was signed only by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Al Haji Kromah's wing of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and that it was later accepted by General Roosevelt Johnson's wing of ULIMO. Faced with opposition to the Agreement, the Chairman of ECOWAS dispatched delegations to Liberia and to several ECOWAS member States to seek a compromise.

8. In November, the Liberian parties carried out negotiations at Accra for about three weeks. These led to the presentation by Ghana of a compromise proposal, which sought to address the key issues for an agreement: representation and timing of the seating of the new Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG); selection and status of its Chairman; decision-making by the Council; appointment of ministers; establishment of safe havens; cease-fire; and encampment and disarmament.

9. Agreement was reached in several areas. However, the parties failed to reconcile their differences over the composition of the Council of State and the process of selecting its members. The compromise proposal envisaged a five-member Council composed of the following: one member each from NPFL; ULIMO; AFL/Coalition, which consists of ULIMO-Johnson, the NPFL ministers in LNTG who had broken with Charles Taylor and later became the Central Revolutionary Council (CRC-NPFL), the Liberia Peace Council (LPC) and the Lofa Defense Force (LDF); the Liberia National Conference (LNC); and a fifth member, who would become Chairman, and was to have been elected by an electoral college. Failure to reach agreement on this issue resulted in the suspension of consultations on 30 November 1994.

10. While the Liberian parties were holding their negotiations at Accra, the Chairman of ECOWAS convened a meeting of the foreign ministers of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine on Liberia. The foreign ministers endorsed his initiative. They also agreed that the Ghanaian proposal addressed effectively the concerns which had been expressed about the Akosombo Agreement.

11. In early December, further discussions were held between representatives of the Chairman of ECOWAS and the Liberian factions. During this period, a Ghanaian delegation met with Charles Taylor at his headquarters at Ganta, with the Field Commander of the Kromah forces at Voinjama, and with the Johnson forces at Tubmanburg.

12. The parties returned to Accra on 18 December and, having resolved their key differences, were able to sign an agreement on 21 December. This Agreement (known as the "Accra Agreement") (S/1995/7, annexes I and II) was signed by all the factions currently involved in the Liberian civil war, namely the signatories of the Akosombo Agreement (NPFL, ULIMO-Kromah and AFL) and ULIMO-Johnson, LPC, LDF and CRC-NPFL.

13. The Accra Agreement clarified and expanded the Akosombo Agreement. It stipulated that a cease-fire would come into effect by midnight on 28 December 1994. A new, five-member Council of State would be installed within 14 days composed of one member chosen by each of NPFL, ULIMO, AFL/Coalition and LNC and Mr. Tamba Taylor, a traditional chief chosen by NPLF and ULIMO. Elections would be held on 14 November 1995 and a new Government installed on 1 January 1996.

14. The signatories to the Accra Agreement further agreed to facilitate the establishment of safe havens and buffer zones throughout Liberia. In a separate document (S/1995/7, annex I), those who had not already signed the Akosombo Agreement accepted the terms and conditions of that Agreement as modified.

15. It is too early to assess how far the Liberian factions will adhere to the terms and conditions of the Accra Agreement. However, the cease-fire, which came into effect at midnight on 28 December as stipulated, is still holding. My Special Representative has advised that reports of cease-fire violations have not been verified and that such incidents as have occurred were minor and isolated and did not constitute proper cease-fire violations.

16. The AFL/Coalition members are experiencing some difficulties in agreeing on their nominee for the Council of State, and Ghana is attempting to help them agree on a compromise. No similar difficulties appear to be facing the larger factions.

17. The next step under the Accra Agreement will be the installation of a new Council of State of the LNTG. I have been informed by my Special Representative that President Rawlings will be convening a meeting of all the Liberian factions on 9 January at Accra to finalize measures for this step.

III. MILITARY ASPECTS

18. Since my report of 14 October, the military situation in Liberia has remained highly charged and unstable. The hostilities, which resumed in September 1994, have spread to over 80 per cent of the country. Fighting has caused massive population displacement. Humanitarian assistance outside Monrovia has had to be suspended and there have been reports of human rights abuses by all factions. United Nations military observers have had to be withdrawn from most UNOMIL-team sites. The security situation in Monrovia itself has deteriorated significantly.

19. As stated in my last report, the circumstances in Liberia had made it necessary to reduce the number of UNOMIL military observers to approximately 90, compared with the Mission's authorized strength of 368. UNOMIL operations are presently restricted to the areas under ECOMOG control, namely Monrovia, Kakata and Buchanan. They are limited to monitoring the cease-fire, to the extent possible, and to assistance in the delivery of humanitarian support.

20. Fighting between the factions has mainly taken the form of low-level skirmishes accompanied by looting and the destruction of infrastructure. The northern and eastern regions, the control of which has been contested by the

NPFL and Coalition forces, have been the worst affected. ULIMO-Kromah forces had also made incursions into NPFL-held areas in September 1994, although the NPFL has recently regained some lost ground. During the first half of December, NPFL incursions into the Firestone Plantation and Bong Mines were contained by ECOMOG, which has reinforced its presence in those areas. There have been clashes between the two factions of ULIMO in the western region.

21. All the factions have experienced serious problems of command and control. In some instances, ground commanders seem to have wrested the initiative from faction leaders, in particular those who visit their forces infrequently. This has marginalized the influence of the political leadership of some of the factions, especially LPC and ULIMO. This could affect the leaders' ability to ensure the cooperation of their combatants in the implementation of the Accra Agreement. In addition, the provision of humanitarian assistance will continue to suffer unless faction leaders are able to ensure the safe passage of relief supplies.

22. In Monrovia, there have been increasing incidents involving the use of arms. On several occasions, factions have clashed with ECOMOG and with each other in the immediate vicinity of the city. This has affected commercial activity. During the night of 14 December, 48 persons were killed by unknown militia at Duport, which raised tensions along the outer periphery of Monrovia. Citizens have formed vigilance squads in conjunction with ECOMOG to prevent similar incidents from taking place. ECOMOG has also reinforced security measures in the Monrovia area and is investigating the 14 December incident.

23. The inability of ECOMOG to deploy troops at major points along the borders of Liberia, in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement (S/26272, annex), has been a factor in the continuous breach of the arms embargo. Because of insecurity and serious logistic difficulties, ECOMOG is now deployed in less than 15 per cent of the country. Factions continue to acquire arms and ammunition across the borders and from sources within Liberia.

24. As the Security Council is aware, some ECOMOG troop-contributing countries have expressed frustration over the failure of the Liberian leaders to agree on a political solution. The financial hardships experienced by these countries in maintaining their troops in ECOMOG have added to their frustration. In the circumstances, they have indicated their intention to withdraw their troops unless there is progress in the peace process or financial assistance is provided. Some have already drawn down their contribution to ECOMOG.

25. The role of ECOMOG in Liberia continues to be crucial. Should the factions prove themselves committed to the Accra Agreement, ECOMOG forces will have to be strengthened to assist in its implementation. If, however, the factions resume hostilities, a strengthened ECOMOG force would be needed to maintain security throughout the country, though it seems unlikely that in such circumstances the troop-contributing countries would be prepared to provide the forces required.

IV. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

26. In my last report, I referred to the extreme hardship of the civilian population throughout rural Liberia as a result of the recent hostilities. The situation has continued to deteriorate. It is now estimated that the number of persons in Liberia requiring humanitarian assistance has risen to 1.8 million. In Monrovia, a constant influx of displaced persons has brought the population to 1.3 million, nearly 3 times the level before the civil war. These developments have significantly increased tension within the community and are further exacerbated by a reduction in commercial activity, rising prices and an increased crime rate.

27. In seeking to respond to humanitarian needs in this volatile environment, national and international relief organizations have to function under even more difficult circumstances than before. The loss of command and control by the leaders of the warring factions and the complete disregard for human suffering by their fighters has limited humanitarian activities to ECOMOG-controlled areas. Increased insecurity has made efforts to expand relief operations into the interior a complex and difficult task. Relief assets and supplies have been looted by factions and humanitarian staff have been displaced. Unable to function effectively in Liberia and given pressing requirements elsewhere, some organizations have redeployed a number of their professional staff to other countries. Liberia's humanitarian tragedy has thus worsened at the precise moment when the capacity of the relief community has been significantly weakened.

28. The donor community, including, in particular, the European Union and the United States Agency for International Development, continue to support the relief community in its efforts to resume delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the country. However, this will only be possible if the warring factions and their commanders on the ground provide the minimum conditions of safety and security, thereby enabling assistance to reach the hundreds of thousands of Liberians who have received very little for over three months. For its part, UNOMIL has used its limited assets, in particular its modest helicopter capacity and its contacts with the various parties, to advance the cause of humanitarian relief.

29. While mindful of the current operating climate and its constraints, the humanitarian organizations of the United Nations system, in full consultation with non-governmental organizations, have prepared a consolidated inter-agency appeal for Liberia, seeking extrabudgetary resources totalling approximately $64 million to meet emergency, life-saving needs during the first six months of 1995. It is expected that the appeal will be launched in early 1995. In addition, discussions continue with donor representatives resident in Liberia and multilateral financial institutions on possible areas of more long-term support to Liberia, should political reconciliation be achieved.

V. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

30. As indicated in my report on the financing of UNOMIL (A/49/571 and Add.1), which is currently before the General Assembly for its consideration, the cost of maintaining the Observer Mission at its reduced strength is estimated at $1,828,100 gross ($1,745,400 net) per month.

31. Therefore, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of the Observer Mission as recommended in paragraph 35 of the present report, the cost of maintaining UNOMIL during the extension period will be within the monthly rate indicated above.

32. As of 14 December 1994, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNOMIL special account since the inception of the Observer Mission amounted to $5.7 million. In order to provide UNOMIL with the necessary cash flow, a total of $2 million has been borrowed from the peace-keeping reserve fund. This loan remains unpaid. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peace-keeping operations as of 14 December 1994 was $1,545 million.

33. As of 14 December 1994, contributions received for the Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Cotonou Agreement in Liberia amounted to $18.1 million. Of this amount, disbursements totalling $16.4 million have been authorized. Since my last report, the Netherlands has contributed $261,584 to the Trust Fund.

VI. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

34. With the signing of the Accra Agreement on 21 December 1994 and the implementation of the cease-fire on 28 December, the people of Liberia have been given renewed hope for an end to the war which has afflicted their country since 1990. However, the Liberian parties have signed many peace agreements, only to break them. In the light of this experience, the Liberian people, as well as the international community, have reason to be sceptical about embracing the current peace agreement before the Liberian parties have demonstrated their readiness to honour it.

35. I accordingly recommend that the Security Council extend UNOMIL's mandate for a period of three months. During this period, the Liberian parties will be expected to respect the cease-fire and implement the other relevant aspects of the Accra Agreement, including the installation of the new Council of State. During this period also, my Special Representative will conduct an in-depth assessment of the role the United Nations military observers in Liberia can play in support of the peace process. On the basis of this assessment, he will make recommendations on any adjustments in the strength of UNOMIL which may be required on the assumption that the Liberian leaders provide the necessary evidence of their commitment to peace and their readiness to implement all the provisions of the Accra Agreement.

36. I must remind the Liberian factions that without their full commitment to the peace process, ECOWAS and the international community will not be in a position to continue to assist them in the search for peace in their country.

It is therefore incumbent upon all Liberians, particularly the faction leaders, to ensure that the Accra Agreement and the timetable laid out for its implementation are strictly adhered to.

37. ECOMOG and ECOWAS have played a crucial role in the search for a peaceful solution to the Liberian conflict. I would like to commend the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, for his success in bringing the Liberian factions to sign the agreement of 21 December 1994. ECOMOG will continue to be a critical factor in the implementation of the Agreement and in the maintenance of peace and stability in Liberia, until a freely and fairly elected Government takes office.

38. During his visit to the region, Mr. Kouyaté discussed with ECOWAS member States the assistance they need to maintain their troops in ECOMOG. I have asked my Special Representative to work out, in consultation with ECOMOG, the details of its financial and logistic needs. This will enable me to make an appropriate appeal to Member States to provide the means required.

39. In his report to me, Mr. Kouyaté highlighted the destabilizing consequences of the Liberian conflict on the neighbouring countries. I continue to be concerned that, should the conflict in Liberia continue, the displacement of people and flow of arms over its borders will have serious consequences for stability in the subregion. I therefore call on the States members of ECOWAS to adhere strictly to the arms embargo and renew their commitment to the principles of collective security in ensuring that the Liberian crisis is brought to an end. In this context, it is my hope that a summit of ECOWAS leaders will be convened at the earliest possible date to harmonize their policies on Liberia and promote implementation of the Accra Agreement, including tightening the arms embargo.

40. In the meantime, it is essential to maintain every effort to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of the people of Liberia. I urge the donor community to respond generously to the forthcoming inter-agency humanitarian appeal.

41. As I have already informed the Council, I appointed Mr. Anthony Nyakyi (United Republic of Tanzania) as my new Special Representative for Liberia. Mr. Nyakyi took up his duties in Monrovia on 28 December 1994. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to my former Special Representative, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, for the dedication and competence he displayed for over two years in his efforts to bring peace to Liberia.

UNOMIL DEPLOYMENT
as of December 1994
Mission Headquarters UNOMIL
Regional Headquarters UNOMIL
Airport Team
Seaport Team
Investigation Team
Cantonment Team
The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
LIBERIA
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
CÔTE D' IVOIRE
Atlantic Ocean
Western Region
Northern Region
Central Region
Eastern Region
LOFA
BONG
NIMBA
BOMI
GRAND CAPE MOUNT
GRAND BASSA
RIVER CESS
GRAND GEDEH
SINOE
GRAND KRU
MARYLAND
Mendekoma
Voinjama
Irié
Kailahun
Pendembu
Vahun
Yeala
Zorzor
Nzérékoré
Yekepa
Sanniquellie
Danané
Pujehun
Kongo
Naama Camp
Ganta
Lougatou
Bo
Sulima
Tiene
Kle
Lake Piso
Robertsport
Tubmanburg
Gbarnga
Bong Town
Butlo
Konola
Kakata
Toulépleu
Tapeta
Tobli
Monrovia
CAIS
Towai Town
Cale Town
Zwedru
Dubwe
Tai
Buchanan
Sos Village
Lac
Kaobli
Greenville
Kodeke
Nemeke
Bilapo
Grand Cess
Plibo
Ouaté
Tabou
Harper
0 20 40 60 80 km
0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
Map No. 3802 Rev. 8 UNITED NATIONS
December 1994
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